

Finance and Performance Scrutiny Sub-Committee

Held at:	Council Chamber - Civic Centre Folkestone
Date	Tuesday, 16 November 2021
Present	Councillors Gary Fuller, Peter Gane, Patricia Rolfe and Rebecca Shoob
Apologies for Absence	Councillor Connor McConville
Officers Present:	Kate Clark (Case Officer - Committee Services), Gavin Edwards (Performance and Improvement Specialist), Cheryl Ireland (Chief Financial Services Officer), Charlotte Spendley (Director of Corporate Services) and Lee Walker (Capital and Treasury Senior Specialist)
Others Present:	None

6. **Appointment of Chairman**

In the absence of this committee's Chairman, Councillor Connor McConville, a Chairman was required to be appointed for this meeting.

Proposed by Councillor Peter Gane
Seconded by Councillor Gary Fuller; and

RESOLVED:

That Councillor Rebecca Shoob was appointed Chairman for this meeting.

(Voting: For 4; Against 0; Abstentions 0)

7. **Declarations of interest**

Councillor Peter Gane made a voluntary announcement as he is a member of Folkestone Town Council which is referred to in Agenda Item 3 Half Year Performance Report 2021/22.

Councillor Patricia Rolfe made a voluntary announcement as she is a member of New Romney Town Council.

Councillors Gane and Rolfe declared a DPI as they are directors of Oportunitas Ltd, dispensations have been applied. These declarations related to Agenda Item 5 General Fund Capital Programme Budget Monitoring 2021/22.

Councillor Rebecca Shoob declared a DPI as she is a director of Otterpool LLP, a dispensation has been applied. Referred to in Agenda Item 3 and 5.

8. **Half Year Performance Report (Q1 & Q2) 2021/22**

Report OS/21/09 provided an update on the Council's performance for the first two quarters of the year covering 1 April to 30 September 2021. The report enabled the Council to assess progress against the approved key performance indicators arising from the Council's new Corporate Action Plan.

Mr Gavin Edwards, Policy and Improvement Specialist, presented this report and advised members of an adjustment to the figures; he noted that the KPI 'All Freedom of Information/Environmental Information Requests to be responded to within the statutory period of (20 working days or lawful extension)', the figures for both quarters had been amended due to an admin error – the correct figures for Q1 are 82.38% and Q2 is 70.56%.

Members asked questions, detailed below under the relevant Service Ambitions:

Positive Community Leadership

- Percentage of Food Premises compliant – systems problems had been encountered and members were assured this is in hand and being addressed.
- Play areas – one site per year seems low. This refers to designated priority play areas, large sites which require substantial funding.

A Thriving Environment

- Missed bins – other issues had been encountered, not just crews unfamiliar with routes.

Quality Homes and Infrastructure

- Homelessness – approaches have increased, members asked for more details of these approaches.
- Affordable homes – timeframes and delivery. The pandemic has affected delivery, Mr Edwards will come back to members with further details.
- Homelessness prevented – do the figures include clients who fail to keep in contact with the Council? Mr Edwards will provide further details.
- Members asked for further details on percentage of major planning applications determined.

Transparent, Stable, Accountable and Accessible

- Members asked for further details on Freedom of Information and Subject Access Requests and also asked about additional resourcing,

training and improvements to processes. Problems has occurred due to level of workload, redactions and dealing with complex issues. It was confirmed that there is a Council data protection officer.

- Data breaches – members were advised that one breach had been reported to the ICO.

Proposed by Councillor Peter Gane
Seconded by Councillor Patricia Rolfe

RESOLVED:

That report OS/21/09 and Appendix 1 are received and noted.

(Voting: For 4; Against 0; Abstentions 0)

9. General Fund Revenue Budget Monitoring - Quarter 2 2021/22

The monitoring report C/21/48 provided a projection of the end of year financial position of the General Fund revenue budget, based on expenditure to the 31 August 2021.

Members concentrated their comments on the following:

- Council Tax Collection – the decrease in income is due to the temporary stop on court action and costs due to the pandemic. Recovery action has now commenced again.
- Waste Contract - have extended staffing resources been taken into account? The main resources have come from Customer Services, however senior officers would be asked to provide information of allocation of resources.
- Would there be a plan to report officer time and resource? An exercise is underway, including discussions with Veolia.

Proposed by Councillor Peter Gane
Seconded by Councillor Patricia Rolfe

RESOLVED:

That Report C/21/48 is received and noted.

(Voting: For 4; Against 0; Abstentions 0)

10. General Fund Capital Programme Budget Monitoring 2021/22

Monitoring report C/21/45 provided an initial projection of the current financial position for the General Fund capital programme profiled for 2021/22, based on expenditure to 31 August 2021 and identifies variances compared to the latest approved budget.

Proposed by Councillor Peter Gane
Seconded by Councillor Patricia Rolfe

RESOLVED:
That C/21/45 is received and noted.

(Voting: For 3; Against 0; Abstention 1)

11. **HRA Budget Monitoring - Quarter 2 2021/22**

Monitoring report C/21/46 provided a projection of the end of year financial position for the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) revenue expenditure and HRA capital programme based on net expenditure to 31 August 2021.

Members comments included:

- Highview scheme – how close to carbon neutrality would this scheme be? Work is underway at present exploring this possibility.
- Bad debt provision is £300K in total, increased by £100K.
- Ross House – application to the Decarbonisation Fund, work to commence in latter part of this financial year.
- Capital receipts – how is this predicted? An estimate is made, at present, £1.5mn per year which equates to approximately 10 to 15 property sales per year. Members asked if previous years' figures could be provided.

Proposed by Councillor Patricia Rolfe
Seconded by Councillor Gary Fuller

RESOLVED:
That report C/21/46 is received and noted.

(Voting: For 4; Against 0; Abstentions 0)